

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 9-14, 23, and 24 are currently pending. Claims 16-22 have been canceled by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 16-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over “applicant’s admitted prior art” in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,151,150 to Kikuchi (hereinafter “the ‘150 patent”); Claims 21 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the ‘150 patent; and Claims 9-14, 23, and 24 were allowed.

Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of Claims 16-22 are rendered moot by the present cancellation of those claims.

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

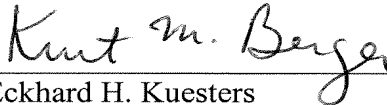
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